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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 FREETOWN 000379

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/01/2018

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SL](#)

SUBJECT: UNDP ENHANCING COLLABORATION & FOCUS IN SIERRA  
LEONE

REF: FREETOWN 267

Classified By: Ambassador June Carter Perry for reasons 1.4(b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Ambassador Perry and Poloff met with Samuel Nyambi, Resident Representative for UNDP, on July 10. Mr. Nyambi will spend approximately two months in Sierra Leone to provide needed guidance to the UNDP mission, which has suffered somewhat over the past seven months due to lack of leadership at the highest level. He discussed his priorities for the UNDP country program, which include the mining sector, providing assistance to the President with regards to strategy and policy, and finalizing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. He also wants to create mechanisms for regular communication between UNDP and donors on key issues, and encouraging inter-donor engagement. Though Mr. Nyambi intends to leave by the end of August, his brief mission here has and will continue to lay the groundwork for a stronger UNDP country office following his departure. End Summary.

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UNDP IN SIERRA LEONE  
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¶2. (C) Mr. Nyambi explained that Sierra Leone is one of eight countries in Africa where the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) also wears the hat of the UNDP Resident Representative. While the bulk of the day-to-day work is conducted under this arrangement by the Country Director, the ERSG normally provides leadership and manages 25-30% of the workload. Since the departure of the previous ERSG, Victor Angelo, in December 2007, the UNDP Country Director has had difficulty absorbing the additional work. Mr. Nyambi, retired from full-time employment with UNDP, was sent to Sierra Leone to shoulder some of that responsibility, and provide some needed guidance and focus. His mission coincides with that of the Acting ERSG Michael v. der Schulenberg (reftel A), and he will help the A/ERSG shape the proposed follow-on mission to UNIOSIL following the completion of its mandate September 30. Given the A/ERSG's frequent assertion, both publicly and privately, that development needs to be the UN focus in Sierra Leone, Mr. Nyambi will play a pivotal advisory role in determining what the UN presence will look like here in the future.

¶3. (C) Mr. Nyambi highlighted the primary areas of importance for UNDP in Sierra Leone, noting that the local elections were a considerable undertaking for the office. Attention will now be placed on several issues, including: assisting the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to renegotiate mining concessions; establishing a Strategy and Policy Unit within the Office of the President; and finalizing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The PRSP work is particularly critical, because the GoSL has an ambitious timeline planned for its validation in order to hold a consultation with stakeholders in October. Mr. Nyambi sees the role of UNDP in this process is to ensure that as many stakeholders, including local civil society groups, are

active in validating the strategy, and that the consultation in October hosts traditional and emerging donors. Another area of potential focus is the maritime sector, and he expressed interest in closely collaborating with the Mission on maritime security efforts, as well as development of the fishing sector.

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USG EFFORTS AND DONOR COORDINATION  
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14. (C) Ambassador Perry outlined the Mission's key areas of engagement with regards to programming, putting special emphasis on issues of rising importance, including health and encouraging trade and investment. She indicated that it would be worthwhile to systematically share information about USG funding with other donors, but that there is no structure in place to do so. Mr. Nyambi agreed with this statement, stating that there is a need for regular engagement between the GoSL and donors, as well as between donors. Both agreed that duplication of efforts is a potential problem that must be avoided to make effective use of the development funds available. The Ministry of Finance and International Development is now receiving direct budget support from UNDP, and will be taking the lead on development issues. Mr. Nyambi is aware that the Minister of Finance and International Development intends to call a meeting with key donors in the near future, and UNDP will encourage the Minister to call such meetings with regular frequency.

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COMMENT

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15. (C) Mr. Nyambi's mission brings focus to important topics in the short-term, and is also creating long-term direction to the UNDP and larger UN mission. The key issues he highlighted are significant, especially strengthening the fishing and mining sectors, finalizing the once-dormant PRSP, and building capacity within the government. Ensuring better coordination among and between all stakeholders, including the GoSL and donors, is also significant and would meet a need often noted by the Ambassador and other senior members of the international community. Finally, Mr. Nyambi's position as advisor to the A/ERSG will be critical in assisting with the development of the UNIOSIL follow-on mission. His presence in-country is a sign that high-level UN officials in New York are cognizant of the void left by the previous ERSG's departure, and the need for strong leadership and guidance within the UN system in Sierra Leone. End  
Comment.  
PERRY